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ABSTRACT

A survey of 205 people, 4 group interviews with approximately 30 people, and 6 design and analysis meetings involving approximately 40 people were conducted in a 1999 participatory study of contingent workers in Toronto. (Contingent work was defined to be lower-waged forms of non-permanent work arrangements that include contracting, employment through a temporary agency, sequential short term employment multiple job holding, non-permanent part-time work, and self-employment where the worker does not hire anyone else.) The study found that, despite popular perception of the attractiveness of such "flexible" work arrangements, most contingent workers wanted to break into or rejoin the permanent, core workforce but were prevented from doing so by rules of temporary employment agencies, lack of education, immigration status, or discrimination. These workers received very low wages, had breaks in employment between assignments, worked long days on short notice, and usually lacked benefits such as sick leave, disability, and unemployment insurance. The study determined that the so-called work flexibility is not favored by most contingent workers and is usually a hidden form of unemployment or underemployment. The researchers concluded that increasing the incidence of contingent work may have detrimental long-term consequences for the workers as well as for society as a whole. (KC)

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Contract
Temporary
Agency
Casual
PART TIME

BREAKING THE MYTH OF FLEXIBLE WORK:

CONTINGENT WORK IN TORONTO

A Study Conducted By The
CONTINGENT WORKERS PROJECT

Report Prepared By
Alice de Wolff

September 2000

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INDEX

		Page
Summary		i.
Section I	**Introduction to the Study**	1.
Section II	**Context of the Study**	3.
	Contingent Workers in the Canadian Labour Market	
1.	Employment and labour market strategies of the 1990s	3.
2.	The growth of contingent work	4.
3.	Women and men in contingent work	6.
4.	Age of contingent workers	7.
5.	Earnings and contingent work	8.
6.	Immigration and contingent work	9.
7.	Health and safety	12.
Section III	**Survey Respondents**	14.
1.	The Survey	14.
2.	Demographics: gender, age, time in Canada	15.
3.	Employers	16.
4.	Work Arrangements: contract, self-employed, temporary, part-time and multiple jobs	20.
Section IV	**Issues**	24.
1.	Earnings and Income	24.
2.	Downloading Costs To Employees	27.
3.	Hours and Schedules	32.
4.	Health & Safety	34.
5.	Discrimination and Harassment	37.
6.	Impact on Quality of Work	38.
7.	Impact on Personal Life	39.
8.	Positive Aspects	40.
9.	Work Futures	41.
Section IV	**Report Recommendations**	43.
Section V	**Appendix of Tables**	46.
Table A:	Work Arrangement by Gender, Age and Time in Canada	47.
Table B:	Work Arrangement by Monthly Earnings	48.
Table C:	Work Arrangement by Hours Worked Per Week	49.
Table D:	Work Arrangement and Number of Jobs/Contracts in Last 12 Months	50.
Table E:	Work Arrangement by Industry	51.

Table F: Monthly Earnings by Primary Industry of Employment 52.
Table G: Company Size by Work Arrangement and Monthly Earnings 53.
Table H: Monthly Earnings by Gender, Age and Time in Canada 54.
Table I: Earnings and Scheduling 55.
Table J: Most Important Benefits 56.
Table K: Most Positive Aspects of Work 56.
Table L: Health and Safety Concerns 57.
Table M: Concerns About Impact of Work on Personal Life 57.
Table N: Concerns About Work Future 58.

Index of Figures Page

Figure 1. Employed in Canada by Class of Worker, 1989 - 1998 4.
Figure 2. Structure of Canadian Labour Market: Employment by Class of Worker 1998 5.
Figure 3. Women and Men in Different Employment Types 6.
Figure 4. Change in Men's and Women's Employment 1989 - 1998 7.
Figure 5. Age of Employed Contingent Workers 8.
Figure 6. Earnings and Contingent Work 9.
Figure 7. Employment Income by Ethno-Racial Group, Toronto, 1995 11.
Figure 8. Self-Employment by Ethno-Racial Group, Toronto, 1995 12.
Figure 9. Types of Work Arrangements 14.
Figure 10. Age of Survey Respondents Compared to Toronto Labour Force, 1999 15.
Figure 11. Percentage of Respondents Employed in Each Industrial Sector 17.
Figure 12. Work Arrangements In Each Industrial Sector 17.
Figure 13. Percentage of Respondents Earning Less Than $1,500 / Month, by Gender 25.
Figure 14. Percentage of Respondents Earning Less Than $1,500 / Month, by Age 26.
Figure 15. Percentage of Respondents Earning Less Than $1,500 / Month, by Time in Canada 26.
Figure 16. Respondents Covered by Government Insurance 29.
Figure 17. Responsibility for Respondents' Holiday, Overtime and Severance Pay 29.
Figure 18. Respondents' Coverage for Negotiated Benefits 31.

BREAKING THE MYTH OF FLEXIBLE WORK
CONTINGENT WORK IN TORONTO

Report Summary

This study contributes to a more detailed understanding of the polarization that is developing in the Canadian labour market between the wages and working conditions of those who have permanent full-time jobs and those of the growing number of contingent workers who are self-employed or employed on contract, temporarily or part-time. The report begins with a review of available information about contingent work in Canada in order to provide a context for the results of a participatory study with workers in Toronto. The study highlights the characteristics of five different work arrangements and the issues that are of particular concern to low income contingent workers.

The increase in the proportion of 'flexible" non-standard jobs is a new labour market pattern in Canada. It is a completely predictable outcome of employment strategies and policy of both private sector employers and governments over the past decade which have cut back on core permanent workers and increased the periphery of flexible workers. In that period, the only employment type that increased in numbers and proportion was low income self-employment. We estimate that there may be as many 1,238,800 non-standard workers in the greater Toronto area. A large proportion are new immigrants who are channeled into self-employment and temporary work. We are beginning to see that these forms of work play a key role in the creation and maintenance of ethno-racial segmentation in the city's workforce and an ethno-racial polarization in income. Young people here and across the country also find themselves in contingent work more frequently and far longer than they expect.

The image of contingent workers that appears to be shaping most public and private human resource policies is that of a consultant or a highly skilled technical worker - people often referred to as "knowledge workers" who are able to negotiate high fees and flexible hours that suit them. The study shows that this image fits only a very small proportion of the contingent workforce. The survey and interview components of the study examined in depth the concerns of a largely representative group of 205 Toronto workers . The results are a picture of the workplace and broader social effects of the new "flexible" employment.

The most striking finding of the study, and the largest concern of the study respondents, was the low level of income that they were receiving. 69.4% earned less than $1,500 per month, or a maximum of $18,000 a year. Women respondents earned less than men; young and older workers earned less than mid-age workers; and recent

immigrants earned less than those who had been here longer. 40% of the earners at this level were the sole earners in their households. 72% of study participants said that they wanted more permanent, secure work at a fair wage.

In addition to the stresses of low income, the study found that employers are downloading other costs to these workers. When an employee becomes a contractor she or he becomes responsible for their own equipment, its maintenance, overtime pay, holidays, sick leave, maternity leave, training, pension provisions, medical insurance and long term disability insurance. The study heard a number of accounts of situations where employers had illegally defined employees as independent contractors, or not provided over time, or workers compensation coverage, or even paid minimum wages when they should have. The result is that this group of low waged workers are carrying more expenses than higher waged permanent workers. More accurately, they are concerned about their inability to cover these costs.

Further, governments are downloading costs to these workers. Almost half of the respondents were not covered by federal Employment Insurance, and two thirds did not think that they were covered by the provincial Workers Insurance and Safety Board. Even those who think they are covered find that eligibility criteria tend to exclude contract and temporary workers from training and other benefits. This may be a defining feature of contingent work: that workers do not have access to either government or employer assistance with lost earnings due to major employment transitions, illness or injury. It is almost impossible for these workers to acquire the resources to create their own individual safety net which can see them through the insecurities of contingent work

Much is made about non-standard workers, particularly women, having more flexible time to be with their families. This study suggests that where employment flexibility actually assists an employee with their family responsibilities, it is likely to be accompanied by fairly high earnings. The study participants were dealing with a very different reality - unpredictability and a constant process of re-scheduling rather than flexibility. 43% didn't know their schedules in advance, 45% worked split shifts; and temporary workers reported being constantly "on call". This has a profound impact on workers' abilities to maintain healthy friendships, intimate and familiar relationships, and stable child or elder care arrangements. They find it difficult to support their children at school, get involved in any community involvement, or to participate in a regular course of study. Respondents appreciated some aspects of contingent work: they had some form of work, some were able to keep their skills updated, and some liked not having to get completely involved in workplace dynamics.

Other studies are beginning to show that contingent work, particularly where workers are paid by piece of work completed, has a higher rate of injury than regularly waged work. The biggest health concern of this group was stress. Only 30% received sick pay, and most worried that they did not receive adequate health and safety training or equipment when they went into each new workplace. Two thirds were not covered by

WSIB, which indicates a very large problem either with the program itself, or with employer compliance.

The study participants shared disturbing accounts of workplace discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, gender and age. Contingent workers are particularly vulnerable, with very little union or legal protection and only marginal access to workplace complaints processes. Temporary agency employers in particular can be selective about who they hire and who they place in assignments in ways that are unaccountable to workers or their advocates. Homecare workers are constantly re-scheduled, and many employers are not accountable about how they make assignments and schedules.

Respondents were worried about their futures. They did not see how they would break out of contingent work, or how their working conditions could improve. There are new set of barriers between permanent and temporary work. Temporary agencies restrict some workers from taking permanent jobs. As a group, contingent workers are very much on their own when it comes to training. Employers rarely invest in contingent workers, and in Ontario right now, no level of government is taking responsibility for workforce development. Temporary workers feel that they are permanently relegated to the contingent workforce when they find that they are excluded from EI training benefits because they have 'employable skills'.

The study was particularly interested in what kinds of issues contingent workers might be prepared to work on together. The single most important thing that survey respondents wanted to change was the nature of their work: they wanted secure jobs that paid fair wages. This can not be accomplished by individual effort alone - there are not permanent jobs for contingent workers to move into in the current labour market. This suggests that contingent workers need a collective voice and strategies which build the kind of power that can change the labour market itself.

There is a debate about what increased work flexibility means for the economy and the society. A remarkably prevalent view is that more flexible work arrangements are part of an evolution which will mobilize the full potential of the work force, and are a necessary component of restructuring which will make it possible for individuals to thrive in the "global" and "information" economies. Another view is that they are forms of under-employment, or are hidden forms of unemployment and that they will create long term costs for our society. This study shows that when we examine the concerns of low income contingent workers, who are a large segment of the labour market, there is no question that most are under-employed, that the so-called work flexibility is not what they would choose if they could, and that their lives are significantly disrupted by the low wages and schedule flexibility that is required by these forms of work. All aspects of labour market analysis, policy and practice must be re-shaped to take into account the impact these forms of work are having on contingent workers' lives.

SECTION I. Introduction To The Study

The Toronto Contingent Workers Study was conducted from October to December 1999. It was initiated by the Contingent Workers Project as a tool to begin to understand the issues that face lower waged temporary workers, contract workers, self-employed and part-time workers, and multiple job holders in the city.

The Contingent Workers Project was initiated by a group of contingent workers and individuals whose jobs involved providing support to unorganized workers. The group came together to discuss the possibility of forming an association, and held a forum in 1998 which explored the issues related to contingent work and how to go about creating an association. This forum posed more dilemmas than it resolved. It became clear that contingent work is a large and diverse phenomenon in the city, that workers have a wide range of concerns and that they are isolated from one another. The question of what issues might bring workers together could not be answered simply. Nor did the discussion make it easy to see whether workers were most likely to break out of their isolation to connect with others in their occupation, or the industries which employ them, in their neighborhoods, or in their ethnic, racial or language communities.

The Project took the next step of finding enough resources to conduct outreach with a wider range of workers over the period of a year, and to explore with them the issues and interests that different clusters might be prepared to work on together. The study was one of the Project's outreach tools. It was intended to map the issues, and then help the Project and other organizations concerned about contingent workers identify strategies that can support groups of interested workers.

Because the issues of low waged contingent workers are not well understood, and because one of the primary goals of the project was to encourage new forms of association among contingent workers, we decided that participatory research methods would be particularly appropriate for the study. The research process became an information sharing exercise that was conducted by a network of individuals who were themselves contingent workers and representatives of approximately 30 organizations. Through their involvement in the research and subsequent workshops, several clusters of workers have emerged as the core of what may become a membership based organization.

The study draws on three sources of information: a survey of 205 people, four group interviews with approximately 30 people and six design and analysis meetings which involved approximately 40 people. Contingent workers and front line workers in organizations that work with contingent workers discussed the issues and helped design the questions that were used in both the survey and discussion

groups. This network tested the questions, distributed the survey, and organized group interviews - two of which were conducted in languages other than English. When the survey was complete, these people participated in meetings which examined and analysed a preliminary summary of the data. They then moved on to develop strategies which were specific to three particular clusters of workers: home care workers; community service contract workers; and temporary service industry workers.

What Is Contingent Work?

For the purposes of this study we have understood contingent work to be lower waged forms of non-permanent work arrangements which include: contracting, employment through a temporary agency, sequential short term employment, multiple job holding, non-permanent part-time work; and self-employment where the worker does not hire anyone else.

The similarity among these forms of work is that they result from employers' strategies which move people in and out of workplaces on a flexible and often uncertain basis. Employers use contingent workers like a just-in-time human resource inventory[1] - they are only in the workplace when the employer feels they are needed. Consequently, employers do not have strong contractual relationships with contingent workers, and tend to see them as being outside of their permanent or core workforce.

Workers themselves rarely think that the work they do is somehow "contingent". They often do the same tasks as people with permanent jobs, they have the same work load, work on the same equipment and work right beside permanent workers. In other situations they are the only people doing the work. At the same time, they are very aware that the terms of their employment are completely different than those of workers who are more securely in the core of the labour market.

[1] Kathleen Barker and Kathleen Christensen define contingent work as the "human resource equivalent to a just-in-time inventory system", *Contingent Work: American Employment Relations in Transition*, Cornell University, 1998.

SECTION II. Context Of The Study
Contingent Work And The Canadian Labour Market

1. Employment and Labour Market Strategies of the 1990s

Employers and all levels of government engaged in massive restructuring in Canada during the early to mid 1990s. In much of the private sector this was done in the name of maintaining profitability through the recession, and restructuring for global competition. Governments responded to business and international financial pressure to cut deficits by reshaping policy and gutting social program spending. They also embraced freer trade as an economic development strategy and as the legislative foundation for increased contracting out of existing government services. As they came out of the recession towards the end of the decade, employers began another round of restructuring to respond to what many describe as an industrial revolution - the growth of the information economy and electronic business. In this period governments reduced or eliminated their deficits, but did not re-instate program spending, responding instead to pressure to reduce taxes. Neither governments nor employers have returned to the fiscal or employment strategies of the late 1980s.

A key component of both private and public strategies of the 1990s was the encouragement of labour market "flexibility". In Toronto during the first half of the decade, large lay offs and high levels of unemployment meant that employers in most sectors had created the flexibility of an employers' market, and were able to increase skill requirements, lower wages, and reduce benefits. Employers were reluctant to hire into permanent jobs and if they did create new work, the jobs tended to be temporary, contract and part-time. By the middle of the decade most industrial sectors, including health and community services, had permanently adopted some "just-in-time" production and staffing models from the manufacturing sector. These models bring workers, supplies and distributors on site only as they are required by sales and production schedules. Now, at the end of the decade, flexible forms of work have been "normalized" in most businesses and are being described as the model of employment for the new economy.

Throughout the decade government programs have contributed to the creation of a more "flexible" labour force. Many services that used to be provided by government have been contracted out, and much of the work has been transformed from permanent, decently paid jobs to lower paid, less secure, contractual and temporary jobs. In 1996 the federal government restructured the uses of the employment insurance fund. Changes in eligibility criteria have made Employment Insurance (EI) inaccessible to a large proportion of those who pay into it, creating a larger pool

of unemployed workers who are prepared to take any kind of work in order to survive. Employment counselling services have been contracted out, with funding to the new services conditional on the contractor being able to show 'savings' for the EI fund. Consequently employment counsellors experience pressure to get people into any kind of work, and many job seekers are strongly encouraged to become self-employed or temporary workers.

EI supported training policy and programs have traditionally provided some support for workers to move out of lower paid, less satisfactory jobs. That was true until 1996, when the federal government began to transfer responsibility for training and labour adjustment to the provinces. The Ontario government and the federal government have not been able to reach an agreement on the transfer, so Ontario has not taken on the responsibility, leaving huge gaps in the programs available in this province. A much restricted federal EI fund provides the only workforce training resources in the province. The training funds are almost inaccessible to low waged contingent workers. Workers must make a financial contribution, which eliminates the lowest waged workers, and the eligibility criteria tends to exclude workers who are temporary and on contract, defining them as having employable skills and therefore not eligible for training.

The impact of these large scale changes in policy and practice on the part of both private sector employers and government is now visible in the changed structure of the Canadian labour market.

2. The Growth of Contingent Work

Contingent work has increased over this last decade in Canada. Figure 1 shows us that at the end of the 1990s greater numbers and a greater proportion of working Canadians were self-employed, or were working part-time than at the beginning of the decade. These forms of work are not themselves new: what is new is their growth and relative size in the work force

Figure 1
Employed in Canada by Class of Worker, 1989 - 1998 [2]
In thousands

	1989	1992	1997	1998	% Increase 1989-1998	% of New Jobs
Total Employment	13,086	12,842	13,941	14,326	9.5%	
Self-Employment total	1,809	1,936	2,488	2,525	39.6%	57.7%
S.E. - no paid employees	822	904	1,282	1,351	64.3%	42.6%
Employees full-time	9,449	8,937	9,349	9,679	2.4%	18.5%
Employees part-time[3]	1,828	1,969	2,103	2,122	16.1%	18.8%

[2] Combined Tables from Jackson, Robinson, Baldwin and Wiggins, *Falling Behind: The State of Working Canada 2000*, Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives, 2000. Pg 56 and 60. Table Sources: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey.

This pattern of employment growth in the 1990s is new. It was a departure from the pattern of growth in the previous decade and, interestingly, it does not echo growth in the U.S. over the same period. Full-time jobs accounted for 18% of job creation in Canada between 1989 and 1998, compared to 58% during the 1980s (and compared to 75% in the U.S. during the 1990s). Self-employment accounted for 58% of the increase in Canada between 1989 and 1998, compared to 18% during the 1980s (and compared to 6% in the U.S.).[4]

Table 1 indicates that self-employment is the work arrangement that has seen the most dramatic increase in the last decade. The Canadian workers who lost jobs were full-time employed men, while the largest growth was in men's self-employment. Among women, the largest increase was among those who were self-employed.(See Figure 4). Of particular interest is the growth in the numbers of those people whose businesses are not incorporated and who do not employ others - those who tend to have the most precarious income and work arrangements among the self-employed. They account for close to half (42.6%) of the new jobs creased in Canada during the period between 1989 and 1998.[5] Temporary work has also experienced significant growth. Temporary employment grew from 4.9% of employment in 1991 to 11.4% in 1995[6].

Just over half (54.2%) of Canadian workers were employed in full-time jobs in 1998. The other 45.8% were employed in more precarious kinds of work arrangements: self-employment, part-time (in one or more jobs), temporary and short term.

Figure 2
Structure of Canadian Labour Market: Employment by Class of Worker, 1998 [7]

	Number	% of Other Work Arrangements
Permanent full-time	7,766,900	
Other arrangements:	6,559,500	100%
Self-Employed, Own Account	1,674,700	25.5%
Self-Employed, Employer	850,600	12.9%
Temporary	1,308.800	19.9%
Part-Time	1,571,100	23.9%
Employment less than 6 months	790,900	12.0%
Multiple job holder	277,500	4.2%

[3] Note that these last two categories in Figure 1 - full-time and part-time employees - both include forms of contingent work including temporary, contractual and multiple employment.
[4] Picot & Heisz, *The Performance of the 1990s Canadian Labour Market*, Statistics Canada Paper No. 148, April 2000.
[5] Statistics Canada refers to this group as "own account self-employed"
[6] *Falling Behind: The State of Working Canada 2000*, Jackson, Robinson, Baldwin and Wiggins, Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives, 2000. Pg 61.
[7] Source: "Rethinking Employment Relationships", Canadian Policy Research Network (CPRN), October 1999.

Contingent Workers In Toronto

We estimate that there are approximately **1,238,800** workers in the Toronto census metropolitan area who are self-employed, have temporary jobs, work part-time, work at more than one job, or on jobs that last less than 6 months.[8]

Detailed statistical pictures of Toronto's contingent labour force are not readily available. However, it is likely that the concentration of non-standard work is at least as heavy in this economy as it is across the country. It is possible that low waged contingent work is an even higher proportion than in other regions because of the concentration of manufacturing and corporate head offices in the city and their use of temporary and contract workers. It is also a large population centre and has a concentration of retail, personal services, food services, each of which involve large numbers of contingent workers.

3. Women and Men in Contingent Work

At the end of the 1990s proportionally more Canadian women are involved in part-time and short term work and multiple jobs than are men. More men than women are involved in temporary work and self-employment. Figure 3 is a compilation from a number of sources which indicate the employment of men and women in contingent work.

Figure 3
Women and Men in Different Employment Types

Toronto CMA, 12/1999 [9]	% Women	% Men
Total Employed	46.1%	53.9%
Part-Time Employed	66.4%	33.6%
Multiple Job Holders	51.4%	48.6%

Ontario and Canada	% Women	% Men
Non-permanent Employed, Canada 1995 [10]	57%	43%
Temporary Employed, Ontario 1997[11]	48.9%	51.1%
Self-Employed, Own Account, Canada 1996[12]	39.4%	60.6%

[8] Estimates based on CPRN, Figure 2: 45.6% of employed are in precarious forms of work. In February 2000 the total number of people employed in the Toronto census metropolitan area was 2,549,000. Source: Labour Force Survey, Table XX6(A), February 2000.
[9] Labour Force Survey, 12/99, Table XX6(N) and XX6(L).
[10] 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements, Statistics Canada.
[11] Statistics Canada.
[12] Karen Hughes, Gender and Self-Employment in Canada: Assessing Trends and Policy Implications, Canadian Policy Research Network, November 1999.

Throughout the 1990s the Canadian workers who actually lost jobs were full-time employed men, while the largest growth was in men's self-employment. Among women, the largest increase was also among those who were self-employed.

Figure 4
Change in Men's and Women's Employment, Canada 1989 - 1998[13]

	Number of New Jobs	Contribution to Job Growth
Total Change in Men's Employment	447,000	100%
Self-employment	385,000	86.1%
Part-time employment	97,000	21.7%
Full-time employment	-37,000	-8.3%
Total Change in Women's Employment	794,000	100%
Self-employment	330,000	41.6%
Part-time employment	197,000	24.8%
Full-time employment	267,000	33.6%

4. Age of Contingent Workers

Contingent work is done by all ages of workers, but it particularly affects young people. Figure 5 indicates that a large and disproportionate number of people under age 25 are involved in part-time, non-permanent and temporary employment. These kinds of work have acted as an entry into the permanent paid labour force for young people for many years, but the large proportion (54.4% in Toronto[14]) of those who currently don't have permanent work before they are 25 is of serious concern. In Toronto, there are particularly high concentrations of young people from Africa (Ghana), the Caribbean, India and Sri Lanka and Central America who are unemployed or under-employed.[15]

People who have the most secure jobs tend to be between the ages of 25 and 44. Older workers are the most likely to be involved in self-employment. This may indicate that some of the growth in self-employment is associated with the number of early retirements which took place during the restructuring of the 1990s.

[13] Table from *Falling Behind* Jackson, Robinson, Baldwin and Wiggins, Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives, 2000. Pg 57. Source: Labour Force Survey, Statistics Canada.
[14] Labour Force Survey, 12/99, Table XX6(N).
[15] Michael Ornstein, "Ethno-Racial Inequality in the City of Toronto: An Analysis of the 1996 Census". City of Toronto, May 2000.

Figure 5
Age of Employed Contingent Workers

Toronto CMA 12/1999[16]	% 15 - 24 Years	% 25 - 44 Years	% 45 - 65 Years
Total Employed	13.7%	54.1%	30.5%
Full-Time Employed	8.0%	59.4%	33.2%
Part-Time Employed	42.3%	31.2%	21.7%
Multiple Job Holders	11.6%	na	na
Ontario and Canada	**% 15 - 24 Years**	**% 25 - 44 Years**	**% 45 - 65 Years**
Non-permanent Employed, Canada 1995[17]	33%	50%	16%
Temporary Employed, Ontario 1997[18]	40.0%	42.4%	17.5%
Self-Employed, Own Account - Women, Canada 1996[19]	11%	51%	38%
Self-Employed, Own Account - Men, Canada 1996	6%	46%	48%

5. Earnings and Contingent Work

In order to see who is likely to be in contingent work we have looked at statistics collected about several types of work arrangements - self-employed, part-time, temporary and multiple job holding. It is clear, however, that not all people who are self-employed, part-time workers or even temporary workers can be considered "contingent". There are some, although they are a small number, who earn sufficient income to fully provide for a household, or to create income security. Figure 8 shows us that only 2.9% of those who were self-employed in Toronto in 1996 earned enough from their self-employed income to keep a household above Statistics Canada's low income cut off. Statistics Canada defines the Low Income Cut Off as a level of household income below which households strain to meet regular expenses. In 1998 this was estimated as an after tax income of $27,890 in cities over 500,000.[20]

[16] Labour Force Survey, 12/99Table XX6(N) and XX6(L).
[17] 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements, Statistics Canada.
[18] Statistics Canada.
[19] Karen Hughes, *Gender and Self-Employment in Canada: Assessing Trends and Policy Implications*, Canadian Policy Research Network, November 1999.
[20] Statistics Canada, "Income in Canada, 1998", June 2000.

Figure 6
Earnings and Contingent Work

- In 1995 45% of self-employed workers in Canada earned less than $20,000 a year, while only 6.7% earned over $100,000.[21]
- Canadian women who were self-employed and didn't employ anyone else earned 56.4% of similarly self-employed men's earnings in 1996.[22]
- Non-permanent workers' hourly wages were 82% of those of permanent workers in 1995. Their weekly salary was 64% of permanent workers. [23]

The information that we have been able to find and the experience of the survey respondents suggests that substantial proportions of people in each non-standard work arrangement earn low wages.

6. Immigration and Contingent Work

Toronto is the country's largest point of entry for immigrants and refugees, and the city where most stay. Approximately 70,000 immigrants and refugees arrive in the city each year, from literally all parts of the world.[24] The city's population and consequently its labour force have changed dramatically. "In a single generation, an almost exclusively white population dominated by people of European, mostly British background, has become the most diverse city in the world"[25] In 1996 half of the population were born outside of Canada, significant groups from 169 counties of origin had settled here, and 42% of the population were people of color.

These changes contribute to the dynamics of this city's labour market. Toronto has a polarized and racially segmented labour market where some ethno-racial groups are experiencing more difficulty finding permanent stable employment than others. A recent report released by the City's Access and Equity Unit plainly states that visible minority immigrants who are not from Europe experience the highest rates of poverty and have the most difficulty finding permanent employment.[26] "The more visible you are, the more difficulties you have." [27] The city's economy has been able to consistently rely on an under- or unemployed immigrant labour force to fill low waged contingent jobs, and continues to do so.

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[21] Labour Force Update, Volume 1, No3, Autumn 1997
[22] Karen Hughes, Gender and Self-Employment in Canada, CPRN, 1999
[23] 1995 Survey of Work Arrangements, Statistics Canada.
[24] All statistics in this section from Michael Ornstein, 'Ethno-Racial Inequality in Toronto: Analysis of the 1996 Census", Sources Statistics Canada 1996 Census, Access and Equity Unit Report for City of Toronto, May 2000.
[25] "Highlights, Ethno-Racial Diversity in Toronto", Access and Equity Unit, City of Toronto, June 2000.
[26] Ornstien, above.
[27] Michael Ornstein, "Race, income splits Toronto, study warns". Toronto Star, A1, July 7, 2000.

A number of employer and government policies and practices contribute to this situation. Each of these is its own systemic form of workforce discrimination which work together to create a racially segmented workforce.

- Employers do not welcome recent immigrants into their workplace. A scan of HRDC job ads[28] indicates that many employers have established a standard screening mechanism requiring work experience in Canada, which automatically excludes those who have most recently arrived.
- Because Canada's immigration policy screens for those who are more experienced and educated, most immigrant workers arrive with skills and credentials which should qualify them for work here. But education from other countries is not easily transformed into Canadian credentials. Professional and other credentialling bodies continue not to recognize qualifications from other countries and require that individuals re-train in order to qualify in Canada.
- Contingent workers find it difficult to make enough money, or to gain enough control over their work schedules or contracts to purchase re-training for themselves. Even when they have worked enough hours to qualify for EI, they rarely qualify for EI training support for professional or trades re-credentialling. Numbers of immigrants find themselves caught in EI regulations which perpetuate their underemployment. Because many immigrants can not work in their area of expertise, they take what they understand to be temporary work in a field other than their own, hoping that it is an interim measure until they can get Canadian credentials. If they apply for EI funds to re-credential themselves, they are told that because they have work, they have employable skills in that area and are consequently not eligible for EI training funds.
- Further, the relatively new inclusion of some component of "customer service" in most jobs in all sectors of the economy means that employers are looking for strong spoken and written English skills. This creates a significant barrier. Many people who have recently arrived need time to learn workplace English before they can be considered for employment in the occupation of their choice. Individuals receive very little government assistance to learn the language of the workplace - government sponsored English programs have been severely cut, and it is difficult to access English training through EI.
- Immigrant workers also face direct, individual forms of discrimination which make it hard to find or retain secure jobs, including screening during selection and racial and sexual harassment.

The 1996 census indicates that the young people in Toronto between age 15 and 24 who had the highest rate of non-full-time employment (that is they were doing contingent work) were from the following ethno-racial groups: Korean, Greek and European Jewish, Polish, Filipino, or from Trinidad and Tobago. Adults (ages 25 - 65) who had the highest rates of non-full-time employment were from Ethiopia, Ghana, Afghanistan and Iran.

[28] Job Vacancy File, Toronto CMA, January, February and March 2000, HRDC.

Figure 7 is a snapshot of the differences in earnings from employment among ethno-racial groups in Toronto. Far more African, Caribbean, Asian, Pacific Island and Latin American and immigrants are earning low incomes than immigrants who are American, British or European.

We can see some of the implications for contingent workers by looking at the differences between the median income for the whole group, and the income for those who were employed full-time, full-year. The larger differences indicate lower earnings in work that was not full-time, full-year. There were particularly big differences, that is lower incomes for contingent work, for women from Africa, the Caribbean, South Asia, East and Southeast Asia, Arab and West Asia and Latin America. The differences are not as dramatic for men. Men who had the lowest incomes from work that was not full-time full-year were from East and Southeast Asia, and Latin America.

Figure 7
Employment Income by Ethno-Racial Group, Toronto, 1995[29]

	Women's Median Employment Income		Men's Median Employment Income	
	All Women Employed	Full-Time Full-Year Employed	All Men Employed	Full-Time Full-Year Employed
Total Employed	$22,000	$30,000	$27,600	$35,000
Aboriginal	21,400	30,100	28,000	34,700
African, Black & Caribbean	15,000	25,000	21,400	26,000
South Asian	16,000	25,000	21,000	27,900
East & Southeast Asian, Pacific, Islander	18,000	25,000	21,500	30,000
Arab and West Asian	15,000	27,000	23,000	28,300
Latin American	15,000	24,000	20,000	28,000
Canadian	25,000	32,000	30,000	38,000
European	25,000	32,200	30,000	39,000
British	28,000	33,800	32,500	42,000
French	28,900	34,000	32,000	39,000
American, Australian, NZ	32,000	38,000	35,000	45,000
Northern Europe and Scandinavia	27,000	35,000	32,400	40,500
Baltic and E. Europe	21,100	31,000	28,400	37,000
Southern Europe	19,200	26,400	25,000	32,500
Jewish and Israeli	25,900	37,000	31,000	40,000

Figure 8 is a snapshot of the ethno-racial composition and earnings of the self-employed workforce in Toronto. While very few self-employed workers earned over

[29] Ornstein, taken from Table 7, page 62 - 64.

$25,000, the ethno-racial groups who had the lowest proportion of earners in that category were African, Black and Caribbean, and South Asian.

Figure 8
Self-Employment by Ethno-Racial Group in Toronto, 1996 Census[30]

	Women	Men	Total	% of All Self-Employed	% Earning More Than $25,000
All Self-Employed	45,880	76,970	122,850	100%	2.9%
Aboriginal	515	670	1,185	.9%	3.7%
African, Black & Caribbean	1,945	3,490	5,435	4.4%	1.2%
South Asian	1,605	3,465	5,070	4.1%	1.3%
East & Southeast Asian, Pacific, Islander	6,030	8,780	14,810	12.0%	2.0%
Arab and West Asian	815	2,545	3,360	2.7%	5.1%
Latin American	775	1,220	1,995	1.6%	1.7%
Canadian	1,925	3,530	5,455	4.4%	2.9%
European	32,245	53,245	85,490	69.5%	3.7%
British	16,145	24,125	40,270	32.7%	3.6%
French	1,045	1,310	2,355	1.9%	3.3%
American, Australian, NZ	110	105	215	.2%	4.1%
Northern Europe and Scandinavia	2,315	3,370	5,685	4.6%	3.5%
Baltic and E. Europe	3,540	5,725	9,265	7.5%	3.7%
Southern Europe	4,370	10,275	14,645	11.9%	2.1%
Jewish and Israeli	4,515	8,060	12,575	10.2%	9.9%

7. Health and Safety and Contingent Work

A growing number of studies are demonstrating connections between contingent work and an increased incidence of work related injuries. A recent review of research in industrialized countries found seventy four recent studies that describe an association between precarious employment and negative health effects.[31]

The researchers who compiled this review have themselves conducted a series of studies in Australia which have demonstrated clear connections between different kinds of precarious work and health risks:

- One study of home-based clothing industry workers showed that the level of injury was over three times higher than that of factory based workers in the

[30] Ornstein, above, Table 9, page 76 - 78.
[31] "The Global Expansion of Precarious Employment, Work Disorganization and Occupational Heath: A Review of Recent Research", Michael Quinlan, Claire Mayhew and Philip Bohle, EU Research Workshop, Dublin, May 2000.

same industry. The most significant factor explaining the difference was the way workers were being paid: home based workers were paid by piece of work completed, while factory workers were paid hourly with some production bonuses. This encourages outworkers to cut corners, to under-bid jobs, and to take minimal occupational health and safety precautions. [32]

- A study of self-employed builders in Australia and the U.K in the residential building industry shows that they were more likely to suffer chronic injury than regular employees. The reasons for this include incentive payment systems; disorganization at a work site; inadequate regulatory controls; and the fractured nature of the work which makes it difficult for self-employed individuals to communicate and take collective actions.[33]
- A study of truckers found that self-employed truckers reported more frequent occupational injuries than employees of larger trucking firms, and that they tended to work through pain, taking fewer days off after an injury.[34]

8. Summary

The information reviewed in this section provides a context for the more specific concerns of the individuals involved in the Contingent Workers Project study. Almost half the jobs in Canada are contingent, and it is a growing phenomenon; contingent work pays low wages; younger and older workers are particularly involved; non-European immigrants are more likely to be involved in low income contingent work; and contingent workers are more likely to be injured or sick than permanent workers. This review lets us see that the individuals who were involved in the study were a surprisingly representative group. Their concerns about low wages, job security, health and safety, and increasing barriers between permanent and contingent employment are likely to be echoed by a large number of workers in Toronto.

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[32] Claire Mayhew and Micheal Quinlan, "The Effects of Outsourcing on Occupational Health and Safety: A Comparative Study of Factory-based Workers and Outworkers in the Australian Clothing Industry:, International Journal of Health Services, Volume 29, No. 1, 1999.

[33] Claire Mayhew and Michael Quinlan, "Subcontracting and occupational health and safety in the residential building industry", Industrial Relations Journal, Volume 28, No 3, September 1997.

[34] Claire Mayhew and Michael Quinlan, "Trucking Tragedies: Why Occupational Health and Safety Outcomes are Worse for Subcontract Workers in the Road Transport Industry", School of Industrial Relations and Organizational Behaviour, U. of New South Wales, September 1997.

SECTION III . Survey Respondents

1. The Survey

The survey provides us with a snapshot of the working conditions and concerns of 205 contingent workers in Metropolitan Toronto.

Approximately 1,000 surveys were distributed to contingent workers and their supporters, who passed it on to other contingent workers through employment agencies, settlement agencies, workplaces, workshops, unions, association meetings, personal networks, and community college and university classes. This distribution process was part of building new communication routes among groups and individuals that are interested in, supportive of and in touch with contingent workers.

Figure 9
Types of Work Arrangements

	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
Contract Work	62	30.2%
Self-Employment	13	6.3%
Temporary	49	23.9%
Part-time	56	27.3%
Multiple Jobs	13	6.3%
Other	12	5.8%
Total Respondents	205	100%

That said, the survey population broadly echoes the picture that is available of the low income contingent work force. The exception is that we surveyed proportionally more women than are in the broader contingent workforce.

Respondents were involved in the types of work arrangements noted in Figure 9.

During the process of designing the survey, participants told us that respondents might not identify themselves as "self-employed". Consequently, the survey question included the category of contract work, defined as "you are paid for a specific term or project". If we understand the survey's category of "contract work" as including self-employment and short term employment, the survey respondents broadly echo the clustering of contingent workers in the Canadian labour force (see Section II, Figure 2).

2. Demographics: Who Were the Survey Respondents?

Gender

The survey respondents were mostly women. Of those respondents who responded to the demographic questions, 85% were women and 15% were men. The labour force data that is available suggests that more women are involved in contingent work than in permanent work. Our survey respondents were, however, disproportionately female, a result which reflects the study's distribution strategy to social and community work classes and clusters of home care workers.

Age

The survey respondents were generally younger than the Toronto labour force, with a greater representation of 19 - 24 year olds than are in the general work force. (See Figure 3). This again reflects the survey's distribution, which included youth employment centers and college and university classes.

Figure 10
Age of Survey Respondents Compared to Toronto Labour Force[35]

	% of Survey Respondents
< 19 years	4%
19 - 24 years	26%
25 - 39 years	35%
40 - 54 years	27%
> 55 years	7%

	12/99 Toronto Labour Force
< 19 years	4.7%
19 - 24 years	9.0%
25 - 44 years	54.5%
45 - 64 years	30.4%

Immigration Experience

The majority of respondents were immigrants; 36.2% of respondents had been in Canada less than 10 years; 33.6% had been in Canada over 10 years; and 30.1% had lived here their whole lives. That is, the study had a higher proportion of immigrants than is in the general population in Toronto - it is estimated that approximately 50% of the population are immigrants, and that at least 20% have arrived between 1976 and 1996.[36] Among the survey respondents, 40% reported a first language other than English.[37]

[35] Table XX6(A), Labour Force Survey, Statistics Canada, Toronto Census Metropolitan Area, December 1999.
[36] Michael Ornstein, "Ethno-Racial Inequality in the City of Toronto: An Analysis of the 1996 Census". City of Toronto, May 2000 Page. 26.
[37] The other first languages reported, in order of most frequently reported: Chinese (including Cantonese and Mandarin), Tamil, Tagalog, Polish, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Yoruba, Twi and Ojibwe.

The discussion groups and meetings that were associated with the study emphasized that many newcomers enter the workforce as contingent workers, and remain as contingent workers far longer than they anticipate. They experience the isolation of contingent work and run into barriers to more permanent employment. Respondents emphasized that new immigrants are particularly open to exploitation and discrimination in this labour market because of language barriers and unfamiliarity with their rights as workers. They observed that there is very little enforcement of Employment Standards in the province, and that workers have no protection if they do speak out and try to exercise their rights.

3. Employers

Industrial Sectors

Contingent workers are employed across all industrial sectors. Unfortunately, the broad statistical overviews available to us do not make it clear whether they are more significantly employed in some sectors than others, or whether there are concentrations of some work arrangements in certain industrial sectors. This survey provides us with some information about respondents' employment in all industries, but provides the most detail about community services. By far the largest proportion of survey respondents were employed in community services. This concentration reflects the survey distribution process, which included several classes of community or social workers.

Figure 11
% of Respondents Employed In Each Industrial Sector

	% of Respondents	Ranking by Number of Respondents
Community Agencies	29.7%	1
Services to Business	11.0%	2
Health Services	11.0%	2
Personal Services	11.0%	2
Retail	10.2%	3
Government	8.5%	4
Manufacturing	7.2%	5
Tourism, food & beverage	5.9%	6
Finance, Insurance	2.9%	7
Construction	2.1%	8
Transportation	0%	

Participants in the design process suggested that we look at whether some industries may be more likely to utilize one type of contingent work arrangement, and others some other form. Figure 11 indicates that when we look at the proportion of respondents in employment arrangements in each industrial sector, the following differences can be seen:

- government and community agencies employed the greatest proportion of contract workers
- services to business employed the largest proportion of self-employed
- construction and manufacturing employed the largest proportions of temporary workers
- retail and tourism employed the largest proportions of part-time workers
- personal services and health services employed the largest proportions of multiple job holders.

Figure 12
Work Arrangements In Each Industrial Sector

	% Contract Workers	% Self-Employed	% Temp Workers	% Part-Time	% Multiple Job Holders
Community Agencies	42.8%	4.2%	20.0%	24.3%	8.8%
Services to Business	23.0%	11.5%	38.5%	19.2%	7.8%
Health Services	15.4%	7.8%	34.6%	30.7%	11.5%
Personal Services	30.8%	7.6%	19.3%	26.9%	15.4%
Retail	4.1%	4.1%	8.2%	79.1%	4.1%
Government	55.0%	5.0%	15.0%	25.0%	
Manufacturing	35.4%		58.6%		5.9%
Tourism, food & beverage		7.1%	14.3%	71.5%	7.1%
Finance, Insurance	28.5%		71.5%		
Construction	20.0%		80.0%		

These trends in the industrial location of survey respondents appear to strengthen some common perceptions of the labour market. Each of the following was described in the course of the group interviews, as people talked about how contingent work has increased in their workplaces.

- Government downsizing has been accomplished in part by decreasing the number of permanent jobs and increasing the amount of work that is contracting out.
- Community agencies have an increasingly precarious funding base and consequently use contract workers for specific, short term projects.
- Just-in-time management of production staffing in manufacturing has increased, which uses temporary workers, short shifts, split shifts, and lay offs to bring workers on site only as they are required by sales and production schedules
- Jobs in personal services such as home care and cleaning are likely to be low waged. Consequently workers need more than one in order to support themselves, and certainly to support a family.

Earnings In Industrial Sectors

Most respondents earned low wages (see discussion in section 5.1). The largest groups of the survey's lowest earners were employed in tourism, construction and retail: The following groups earned below $1000 a month.

- 88.8% of tourism respondents
- 80% of construction respondents
- 72.2% of retail respondents.

The highest earnings were reported in services to business and health services. The following earned more than $3,000 a month

- 21% of services to business respondents
- 15% of health service respondents. (Table F).

Size of Employer

Contingent, or flexible employment strategies are being used by all sizes of employers. Respondents were employed fairly evenly by small, mid-sized and large employers. There were more contract workers employed in companies with 10 - 49 employees. The largest proportion of respondents who worked in large companies (with over 500 employees) were parttime workers. (Table G).

Earnings were significantly low for workers in all company sizes. There was some indication of a possibility of higher salaries in very small companies (less than 9 employees) and very large companies (over 500 employees). (Table G).

Unionization

Only 27 or 13.1% of respondents were included in a collective agreement. Of these, 61% were part-time workers and 39% were contract workers. Most of the union contracts were in the public sector: six were in community based agencies and eight in government. Most of the private sector collective agreements (6) were in retail.

The unionized workers were not among the highest paid survey respondents. Nine part-time workers earned less than $1,000 a month, including five who earned less than $500. Six contract workers and four part-time workers earned between $1,000 and $2,000 a month. One part-time worker earned more than $3,000 a month.

4. Work Arrangements

Since the project's interest was to notice where there might be common issues or concerns among clusters of workers, we have taken some care to look at what the survey tells us about respondents and their working conditions in each work arrangement.

Contract Work

Respondents	The second highest concentration of men in the study sample were doing contract work. These respondents were evenly distributed across all ages, with a higher concentration of workers aged 40 - 55 than most other clusters. They were new immigrants, older immigrants and people who had lived here all their lives. (Table A)
Earnings	The largest cluster of contract workers earned between $1,000 - 2,000 per month. A small number of contract workers were among those who reported the highest incomes in the survey (above $3,000 per month. (Table B).
Hours	Most contract workers were working full-time hours or longer. (Table C)
Numbers of Jobs [38]	Less than half of contract respondents had only one job over the previous 12 months. 40% had two or three jobs. Several reported between four to six jobs. (Table D).
Industrial Sectors	44% of contractors worked for community agencies; 16% worked in government and another 12 % worked in personal services. (Table E).
Size of Employer	The largest cluster of contract workers was employed in firms with 10 - 49 employees. (Table G).
Unionization	9 contract workers - 14.5% of all contract respondents - were unionized. Most of them worked in the public sector, in either community agencies or government.

[38] The survey data does not distinguish between sequential jobs or contracts, and jobs held at the same time.

Self-Employment

Self-employment is a term that few people actually use to identify themselves. It is a technical term, mostly used by Statistics Canada and Revenue Canada. People who are self-employed tend to think of themselves as contractors, freelancers, or as small business people.

Respondents	Those people who identified as self-employed (rather than as contract workers) were mostly mid-age workers (25 - 39), and had been in the country over ten years or had lived here all their lives. (Table B). A larger proportion of men were self-employed than in any work arrangement.
Earnings	The largest cluster of self-employed workers earned less than $1,000 per month. (See Table C). Respondents who reported the highest incomes (above $3,000 per month) were in contract, self-employment and temporary work. (See Table C)
Hours	Self-employed workers were polarized, either working very little, or close to full-time or longer. (Table C)
Number of Jobs	Half the self-employed worked at only one job in the past year. (Table D).
Industrial Sectors	More self-employed respondents worked in community agencies and services to business than in other industries. (Table E).
Size of Employer	Almost all those who were self-employed worked for employers who had less than 9 employees (Table G).
Unionization	No self-employed workers were covered by a union contract.

Temporary Agency Work

Respondents	A large proportion of temporary workers was older than 55 years. The largest group of new immigrants were in this cluster. (Table A).
Earnings	The largest cluster of temporary workers earned less than $1,000 per month. Proportionally more temporary workers

	earned less than $1,000 per month than workers in any other work arrangement. Several temporary respondents reported the highest incomes (above $3,000 per month). (Table C).
Hours	By far the largest group of temporary workers were working full-time. (Table C)
Number of Jobs	43% of the temporary workers reported that they had one job in the previous 12 months. Most (51%) had two or three jobs. (Table D). It is not clear whether respondents were reporting the number of agencies who employed them, or the number of assignments.
Industrial Sectors	The largest cluster of temporary workers were employed in community services (22%). A considerable proportion of them worked in manufacturing (15.6%) and services to business (15.6%). (Table E).
Size of Employer	Temporary workers were employed in larger work places. Most were clustered in workplaces with between 50 and 100 employees. (Table G).
Unionization	No temporary workers were covered by a union contract.

Part-Time

Respondents	A large proportion of **part-time** workers were young (age 19 - 24). A smaller proportion of part-time workers were immigrants than among the other work arrangements. (Table B).
Earnings	The largest cluster of part-time workers earned less than $1,000 per month. (Table B)
Hours	Not surprisingly, most part-time workers were working less than 20 hours each week, although some were working longer hours. (Table C)
Number of Jobs	Two thirds (66.6%) of the part-time respondents worked in one job. The remainder had two or three jobs in the past year. (Table D).

Industrial Sectors	The largest group of part-time respondents worked in the retail sector (27%). 24% worked in community agencies, and 14% in tourism, food & beverage jobs. (Table E).
Size of Employer	Part-time workers were fairly evenly employed by all sizes of employers. The largest cluster worked in companies with more than 500 employees. (Table G).
Unionization	14 part-time workers were covered by a collective agreement (25% of all part-time respondents). The largest group of these were employed in the retail sector.

Multiple Jobs

Respondents	The largest group of multiple job holders was between the ages of 40 and 55. (Table A)
Earnings	The largest cluster of multiple job holders earned between $1,000 - 2,000 per month. (See Table B).
Hours	Proportionally more multiple job holders worked over 40 hours each week than any other group, suggesting that they were combining jobs that were more than part-time (20 hours per week). (Table C).
Number of Jobs	Most multiple job holders had two or three jobs in the last year. (Table D).
Industrial Sectors	The multiple job holders in the survey clustered in community services (33%) and personal services.(22%). (Table E).
Size of Employer	Multiple job holders were fairly evenly employed across small, mid-sized and large companies. (Table G).
Unionization	No multiple job holders were unionized.

SECTION IV: Issues

The issues discussed in this section are central themes that emerged from responses to the survey and the group interviews. They are not listed in an order of importance, except for the first one - earnings and income. How much money contingent workers are able to earn is both an issue by itself, and it has a large impact on virtually every other aspect of their working lives.

1. Earnings and Income

Low income was the single most important issue raised in the survey. The large majority of survey respondents were low income earners: 69.4% earned less than $1,500 per month, or a maximum of $18,000 a year.[39] Women, newer immigrants, and the oldest and youngest workers earned the least. (See Table H). Only 5% earned over $2,500 a month, or a maximum of $30,000 a year. Almost none earned more than the after tax income of $27,890 which is considered necessary to keep a family out of poverty in a major Canadian city.[40]

The survey presents a rare picture of the concerns of low income workers. Much of the current literature on changing forms of work focuses on the interests and concerns of higher income workers, particularly scarce, sought after, highly skilled technology workers. This study provides a different picture, of workers who are in labour markets where there is considerable underemployment and significant levels of "unofficial" unemployment[41], where the work has not traditionally been highly valued, and where employers perceive that their competitive advantage is based on shaving employee costs.

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[39] "Low wage" is defined by Statistics Canada as earning less that two-thirds the economy-wide median wage, ie less than $9.33, or $1,490/month in 1995. Statistics Canada, Survey of Work Arrangements, 1995.

[40] Statistics Canada, "Income in Canada, 1998", June 2000.

[41] Statistics Canada's monthly Labour Force Survey considers someone to be unemployed if they have not worked during the week of the survey, and if they are actively looking for work. It does not capture the numbers of people who do not have enough work, those who are working in an informal economy, or those who have stopped looking for work entirely.

Recent History Of An Income

A carrier for a Toronto newspaper told us that in 1990 he earned approximately $1,300 a month, which included a fee for each customer on the route, a $10/day gas allowance, and a 5 - 7 cent/flyer payment for inserting flyers into weekend supplements. He and the other carriers are defined as independent contractors by the employer.

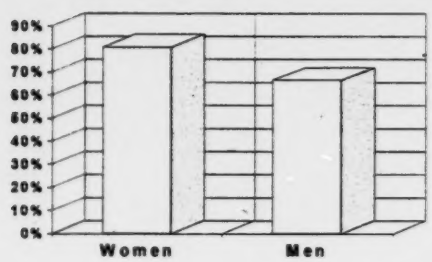
In 2000 the same carrier was making approximately $980 a month. He handles bigger papers and is working longer hours. In 1996 the paper eliminated the $10/day gas allowance, reduced the number of customers on each route, increased the distance to pick up points, and reduced the flyer allowance to 1 cent/flyer.

Because the earnings are lower, more carriers have to work at more than one job. Many bring family members to help them, so that the carrier can finish delivering papers in time to work elsewhere during the day.

There are approximately 2,100 carriers working in similar conditions for this newspaper. Most are new immigrants, with over 70% being from India and Sri Lanka. (Interview).

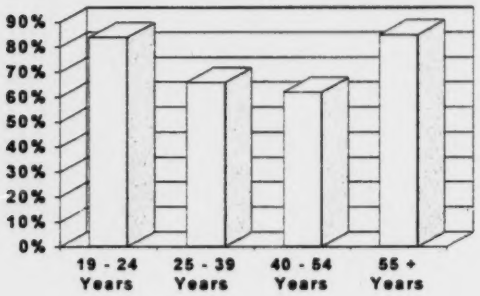
Survey respondents said that their level of pay was the issue that concerned them the most about their work. They all had chosen to/needed to work, but they did not choose to work at their current level of pay and they needed more employment security. Most respondents said that income and employment security was the one thing that they would change if they could, and 72% said that they want to find a permanent job.

Figure 13
% Respondents Earning Less than $1,500/Month, By Gender



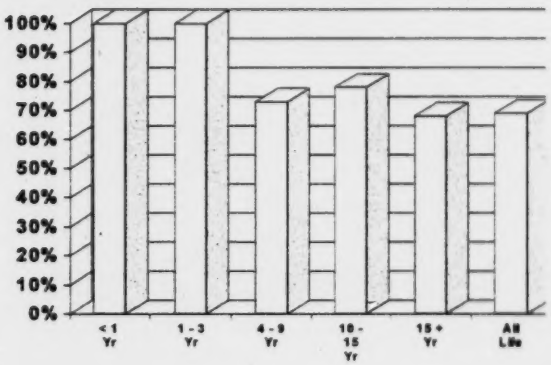
- Among women respondents, 80.9% earned less than $1,500 per month, while 66.6% of men earned less than $1,500 per month.

Figure 14
% of Respondents Earning Less than $1,500/Month, By Age



- 84% of young workers (age 19 - 24) and 85% of older workers (55 and older) earned less than $1,500 per month. The proportion of middle aged workers earning less than $1,500 was lower: 66% of 25 - 39 year olds, and 62% of 40 - 54 year olds earned less than $1,500.

Figure 15
% of Respondents Earning Less Than $1,500/Month, by Time in Canada



- All (100%) respondents who had been in Canada less than three years earned less than $1,500 per month. In comparison, 68% of those who had been in the country over 15 years, and 69% of those who had lived here all their lives earned less than $1,500 per month.

Piece Work

Piece work, or incentive payments are one form of contracting, where workers are not paid by the hour, but by piece of work completed. 14.2% of those who responded said that they were paid by piece of work completed.

Responsibility for Household Income

Of those reporting an income less than $1,500 per month, 38.5% were the sole income earner in their household. Even when they were not the sole household earner, many respondents in this income range were important contributors to their household income: 40.7% of other household income earners also had non-permanent jobs.

Work Arrangement and Earnings

Earnings were low in all work arrangements. Just under 50% of respondents in all work arrangements were earning less than $1,000 per month. Another 35% earned between $1,000 and $2,000 a month. More part-time workers were earning the lowest salaries. Proportionally more self-employed workers were earning at the highest levels reported in the survey. (See Table B)

2. Downloading Costs to Employees

The picture of earnings outlined in the previous section is only a starting place to understand the financial concerns of the workers in the study. Many also had to deal with a number of other costs and worries which most permanent employees do not have to think about.

Taken together, the survey responses indicate a constant pressure on this low waged group of workers to take on costs which have previously been covered by employers or government. They begin to sketch a picture of employer practices which appear to represent a consistent pattern of transferring costs to workers, and a disturbing incidence of illegal practices.

The Transformation of Employees into Independent Contractors

There was some confusion among the survey respondents about just how to describe their work arrangements - whether they were contractors or self-employed, part-time or temporary, and who their employer was (a temporary service agency or the employers at their assignments). This confusion is understandable: most workers think of themselves as employees, and are often not fully aware of the legal and contractual implications of different classifications of work arrangements. While many survey respondents were perfectly clear about their status as contractors, temporary employees or part-time employees, some reported being surprised when they found that they are not considered employees by their employer.

In the course of the study we heard about newspaper carriers, pizza deliverers and shop-floor as well as home-based factory workers who were considered independent contractors by their employers. Some workers did not know that was the arrangement until they received their first cheque. We met some workers who had found a union or a legal worker who was helping them challenge their employment status, but many do not have access to these resources.

Transforming employees into contractors is an arrangement which, when it is legal, makes it possible for employers to transfer to the worker responsibility for everything other than paying the "market price" and negotiating completion for a

piece of work. According to employment law, ***independent contractors*** control how they do their work, set schedules and negotiate completion dates; own some tools and equipment; and are free to negotiate a rate of pay. ***Employees*** work as part of someone else's business, where the employer has control over how the work is done, sets schedules, provides some of work materials, and sets rates of pay. The advantage to employers of hiring independent contractors is that the employer is not responsible for standard pay roll costs and administration, and they do not have to plan, equip, schedule or supervise a work process. The experience of study participants suggests that a number of employers are challenging the limits of the legal understanding of which employees can be considered contractors.

It was clear from the planning sessions and interviews that many workers did not know about their rights as workers. Many were frustrated with what they felt were unfair and exploitative situations. In these sessions and other workshops, the question "Can my employer do this?" came up consistently.

Responsibility for Work Related Expenses

Among the survey respondents, 18.8% said that the costs of equipment and maintenance that they have to provide for their work is increasing

- Among those respondents who earned less than $1,000 a month, 30 reported that they had to pay work related expenses. Most of these were approximately the cost of a monthly TTC pass ($80 - $100). Five, however, reported paying equipment, supplies or transportation costs of between $150 - $300 a month.
- Among those who earned between $1,000 and $2,000 a month, 25 reported that they paid work related costs. Of these, four reported paying costs of between $200 and $600 a month. They were either contract workers or self-employed.

Government "Safety Nets"

Figure 16 suggests that government is also transferring costs to some of the most vulnerable individuals in the workforce. Just under half of the respondents were not eligible for federal Employment Insurance, and two thirds were not covered by the Workers Safety and Insurance Board. While a recent change to E.I. was advertised as making it possible for more part-time and temporary workers to qualify, it is still inaccessible to a significant group of workers. This may be a defining feature of contingent work: that the worker does not have access to either government or employer assistance with lost earnings due to major employment transitions, illness or injury.

Figure 16
Respondents Covered by Government Insurance

	Covered	Not Covered
Employment Insurance	53%	46%
Workers Safety and Insurance Board	34%	66%

Holiday, Overtime and Termination Pay

In a standard employment relationship the employer is responsible for providing holiday pay, overtime pay and termination pay or notice. Figure 17 shows that significant numbers of respondents were either in employment situations where they were not considered *employees* , or their employer was not complying with the ESA. This means that they were absorbing these costs themselves, or more likely that they were not taking holidays, working longer hours and were without income when a job or contract ended.

Three quarters of respondents did not receive termination pay, that is they had no assistance with the costs of moving from one temporary assignment or contract to the next. 38% received no holiday pay. A number talked about how hard, if not impossible it was to take holidays, because of the difficulties of scheduling when you don't know your schedule or your employer or your earnings much in advance.

Figure 17
Responsibility for Respondents' Holiday, Overtime and Termination Pay

	% Who Received from Employer	% Who Paid themselves	% Not Paid
Holiday Pay	60%	3%	38%
Overtime	49%	2%	49%
Termination Paid	20%	4%	76%

A new way of thinking about "termination"

Community workers observed that one of the most difficult things about contract work was the transition between jobs. "You need at least 2 months to look for another job, and it's hard to look while you are working on a contract. Working on contract would not be so stressful if you know there was going to be another job" One worker said, "Funders and employers should provide this safety net. If we can't change the contracting, then somehow make the transitions easier, change the uncertainty. Some body or process should be putting the puzzle pieces together, linking organizations, creating a pool of workers."

Other Negotiated Benefits

The term "benefits" describes a set of costs related to employment which are seen as additional to a wage. While benefits can include medical insurance, pensions, child and elder care, fitness programs, training and education and a variety of associated leaves, the survey asked only about the most standard types of benefits - sick leave, maternity leave, medical and dental insurance and pensions.

These benefits are a kind of tacit recognition by employers that wages are not sufficient to maintain the health and well being of their work force. Most "benefits" are directed to the social reproduction costs of maintaining the health of workers and their households (future and past generations of workers). Since the early 1900s employers have gradually agreed to share both the costs and administration of these broader responsibilities with those "core" workers who have had some bargaining power. Employers in the 1990s are reversing this direction. They have moved more workers out of the "core" of their workforce to a contingent periphery, and have reduced their responsibilities for these broader costs.

The survey results indicate that many low waged workers do not receive these kinds of benefits from their employers and that they can not provide these protections for themselves from their earnings. **Survey respondents reported that sick leave, medical and dental insurance were the benefits that were the most critical for them**. Contingent workers don't stop having dental expenses, or needing sick days or pensions, but these costs have to be paid directly from a low wage. For many workers it means that they have to somehow do without.

Figure 18
Respondents' Coverage for Negotiated Benefits

	Employer assistance	Paid by self	Not Covered
Sick Leave	25%	4%	71%
Maternity Leave	25%	4%	71%
Pension	34%	9%	57%
Medical Insurance	30%	11%	59%
Disability Insurance	20%	7%	73%
Dental Insurance	19%	13%	68%

The benefits listed in Figure 18 can, of course, be purchased by individuals from insurance companies and pension managers. A small proportion of survey respondents received assistance with these costs form an employer - some of these were covered by a partner's employer benefit package. Most respondents, however, were not covered. It is notable that more respondents paid for these kinds of benefits than those described in Figure 16 - approximately one in ten respondents reported purchasing their own coverage. Medical and dental insurance were sufficiently important items that more workers managed to pay for them from their earnings.

Violations of Employment Standards

We also heard about straightforward violations of employment standards, which are in effect a transfer of costs to employees.

Several survey respondents and people in the group interviews reported that they or their colleagues were being paid below minimum wage[42]. We heard of wages of $6/hour in food processing; $5/hour for factory work; $5/hour for temporary work in a cabinet factory. Deductions were being taken from wages for transportation, uniforms and equipment. Two people told us about companies that had hired day labourers, taken them to a work site, didn't pay them at the end of the day/week/project and then disappeared.

We also heard of practices which are unfair, if not technically violations of employment standards. Fruit pickers were being paid $4/hour; baby sitters paid $20 for 12 hours with a child; and students paid significantly less than the permanent workers who they worked along side. Temporary workers were on-call almost constantly, but received no on-call compensation.

[42] The current minimum wage is $6.85 an hour for general workers and harvest workers. Students must be paid $6.40 an hour, and liquor servers $5.95 an hour. (Ministry of Labour, Government of Ontario).

"The agency knows I'm in high school so maybe that's why I get less."

A high school student told us that her life was split between attending school and working 8 - 10 hour shifts most nights. She left for school at 9:00 in the morning, came home at 3:30 to do her homework; caught the subway at 8:00 to go a pick up point and was bussed from there to a factory workplace. She slept for an hour or so on the bus going to and coming back from the workplace. The shifts lasted until 6:00 or 8:00 AM. If it was a short shift, she would get home just in time to go to school. She was paid by a temporary agency $45 for an eight hour shift, $55 for a ten hour shift.

A form of "piece work" which violates the ESA is the deduction of pay for work errors or interruptions. 13.4% of respondents said that if there is a mistake in their work that they are not paid, or that they have to pay for the error.

"They don't pay us when the equipment goes down"

A factory worker who is hired through temporary agencies reported that one agency places a 'foreman' to work shifts with them. This foreman's job included recording all work stoppages on each employee's record. The agency did not pay workers when there were machine shut downs, production interruptions or short production runs. These workers had no option of leaving the workplace, because it was remote and they had been bussed there by the agency. When there were work stoppages, they had to wait until the bus picked them up at the end of the shift, knowing that they were not being paid.

3. Hours and Schedules

A speculation often made about low waged non-standard work is that people trade off their capacity to make higher earnings in order to have more time and flexibility in their lives. This picture is not supported by the study. Almost half (46%) of the survey respondents were working a regular work week or longer, and had no more time than full-time workers. (See Table C).

Rather than having the flexibility to schedule work to fit their lives, what many respondents dealt with was unpredictability and a constant process of re-scheduling their lives around work. This was true for workers who worked part-time hours and those who worked the equivalent of full-time hours. (See Table I).

- 43% of respondents said that they didn't know their schedule in advance.
- 45% worked split shifts.

- 90% said that some weeks they worked too many hours, other weeks they didn't have enough hours.
- Temporary workers reported that they were always "on call ", that they didn't go far from their phone in case they were called for work. "You wait. From morning to 5:00 PM you wait to see if they will call." When they did get a call, they often had only a couple of hours to get to the workplace, which in itself can be challenging for people who do not know the city well and who rely on public transport. Some reported paying taxi fare on their first trip to a workplace so that they could find it, and get there on time. They paid the fare out of their wages.
- Both temporary and shift workers in several different workplaces said that they felt they had no control over scheduling, that good schedules went to management favorites, and that workers were "disciplined" or discriminated against by being given a bad schedule.

Split Shifts and Bad Scheduling

One group of home care workers reported that they had little control over the scheduling of their clients, and that the effect of the schedule on their lives was rarely factored in. "Some calls are scheduled 5 hours apart. Management says go to the mall and wait in between." Workers travel on public transit and are often far from their homes, so can not take a "real" break between calls that are several hours apart. They are not paid for this time.

Scheduling and pay for travel time was also difficult for this group. Some clients were an hour apart by public transit, but the workers were only paid for half an hour travel time.

Long hours did not necessarily correspond with higher pay

While the highest earners in the study were among those who worked the longest hours, by no means all respondents who worked longer hours earned higher wages. Sixteen percent of respondents were working more than 40 hours a week. Among those who worked these long hours, 32% earned less than $1000/month; 40% earned between $1000 and $2000/month; and 28% earned between $2,000 and $3,000/ month.

4. Health and Safety

Stress

The largest health issue that survey respondents identified was job related stress. 58% said that job related stress was increasing, and most said that it was their central health concern. Their stress was related to uncertainty, which has a number of components, including:.

- little control over whether they had work or income
- frequent interviews
- continuously changing schedules
- finding transportation to and finding new workplaces
- adapting to new workplaces, co-workers and work tasks
- discrimination and harassment
- not being able to speak out at work
- close supervision at work
- high performance expectations at work, including increased numbers of tasks
- lack of control over central decisions relating to their work.

Studies other than this one have documented what workers know from their experience - that job strain, that is the organization of the work and its related stress is connected to high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal injuries, migraines, and psychological distress. Researchers have been able to show that those workers who have less control over their work have an increasing, and higher incidence of heart disease than professionals and those workers who have more control.[43] A wide range of other studies are showing that the pressures of "incentive pay", that is pay for work that is completed rather than hourly waged work, is a central and determining factor in increased stress and work related injuries.[44]

Sick Leave And Disability Leave

A second set of concerns was about what happened when workers actually got sick. **Almost three quarters (71%) of respondents did not receive paid sick days and consequently lost pay when they were not able to work.** Of the 55 respondents who were not covered by EI, only one person had their own disability insurance. The rest had no protection if they had an accident or came down with a lengthy illness. Very few are covered by the good will of their employer.

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[43] Marmot, M., & R.G.Wilkinson, Social Determinants of Health, Oxford University Press, 1999..
[44] Michael Quinlan, Claire Mahew, Philip Bohle, "The Global Expansion of Precarious Employment, Work Disorganization and Occupational Health : A Review of Recent Research", EU Research Workshop, Dublin, May 2000.

"I have no safety net if I get sick."

A number of workers who did receive some sick leave reported that it was minimal, and that it was hard to convince employers, particularly temporary agencies, that they were legitimately ill and not able to work.

Sick Pay

Home care workers in one agency could take 36 hours of paid sick leave a year. This is an occupation that is surrounded by sick people, and workers are not immune to illness. "You get this double message. The client doesn't like it if you go over with a cold, but then the management doesn't want you to call in sick." Administrative and management staff were treated differently in the agency - they had more paid sick days.

Workplace Safety

Respondents' second set of concerns was about the lack of health and safety training that they received in each workplace. 39% said that they had not received any workplace health and safety training. Another 28% said that the training they had received was not sufficient and that they often did not receive the proper safety equipment. They reported a range of workplace hazards. Home care workers had to deal with all issues related to working in situations where people are ill, with cleaning products, with a certain amount of lifting and with tobacco smoke in client's homes. Contract workers in a food bank lifted boxes and bags of food all day. Temporary factory workers worked with the same large equipment as full-time workers, and the same health and safety issues.

I almost lost my eye

A temporary worker had a short term assignment in a workplace where he worked with chemicals. He was not given health and safety training and was not provided with goggles. He was splashed with chemicals, and was told by the doctor that he was very lucky that he did not loose his sight.

Workplace Injuries

One quarter (26%) of respondents said that they had job related health problems. The survey did not ask for specifics, but individuals reported two kinds of problems: hypertension and repetitive strain injury. Most survey respondents had no back up if they were injured or became ill as a result of their work.

Two thirds (66%) of respondents reported that they were not covered by WSIB. This points to a very large problem. It is likely that most of these respondents should be protected by the program, but their employers have not made it clear that they are, or are not aware that they should be covered, or are avoiding their legal responsibilities to contribute to the program. Those who are truly not eligible have no income protection if they have a work-related injury or illness. Workers who should be covered must find the resources to sue their employer for any compensation.

Only seven respondents who were not covered had disability insurance - six were covered by an employer's plan and one had their own insurance. The remainder were reliant on their own resources, or on the good will of their employers. The support of employers is a not an option for many - 36% of respondents said that their employers did not take responsibility for job related health and injury.

People who were involved in designing the survey questions recommended that we ask about the experience of those who had been injured at work. Twenty two, or 10% of survey respondents reported that they had been injured at work. None of those injured were union members.

Respondents reported 8 incidents where their employers had been helpful around the injury, and had:

- suggested a wrist support
- taken worker to the hospital
- set up physiotherapy
- given them a few weeks off.

Respondents reported 14 incidents were their employers did nothing about the injury, or had taken negative action. Even though they are legally required to assist workers with first aid and to get them medical help if it is required, employers had:

- complained about the worker to the temporary agency
- laid off the worker
- fired the worker
- told the worker to stop crying
- denied that the injury was work related.

Seven of those who were injured had made a WSIB claim: six succeeded with their claim and one was denied. One respondent said that their injury restricts the kind of work that they can do.

There is some concern that when workers leave a job due to an injury, they are more likely to become contingent workers when they start working again. Those workers who make WSIB claims are likely to feel that the monitoring and counseling they receive is driven more by the administrative goal of achieving 'savings', than by their personal goals of how they want to re-establish themselves in the workforce. Workers report that they are counseled into taking temporary work, and are not supported by the program if they need extra time to sufficiently recover so that they can work at their previous job or its equivalent. Among the twenty two respondents

who had been injured 6 have held permanent jobs, 8 have worked part-time, 1 had worked on contracts, and 5 had temporary work since their injury.

5. Discrimination and Harassment

A number of respondents in our group interviews reported work related discrimination and harassment incidents which were based on race, sex and age.

Contingent work seems to provide more opportunity for practices which enable employers to be selective in ways that are generally understood to violate human rights. Selection and placement processes in the temporary service industry appear to be particularly unaccountable. Agencies can go through the technical steps of including a worker on their list, but then may never select them for jobs, or place them only in poor jobs. Workers and worker advocates may only hear that they were not selected "due to business requirements", or "we don't have work today". It is not easy to uncover the grounds on which individuals were not selected or did not receive a placement call. However, a recent study which looked at the difference between the treatment of Caucasian and African American temporary workers in San Francisco was able to demonstrate that half of the agencies in the study demonstrably favour Caucasian applicants[45].

We heard about:

- several agencies which appeared to select only people who spoke unaccented English
- another which called only those people who did not have children
- agencies which tended to place people from some ethno-racial or language groups, and not others
- one worker was certain that she was not given many assignments because she was too old.

Mothers don't get called

"The agency I am with right now is fine, but I signed up with another one that didn't call me back. I found out from other workers that I shouldn't have told them that I had children. They don't keep you on their list if you have children. They think it takes too long to find child care when they call you."

[45] Ana Nunes and Brad Seligman, "Treatment of Caucasian and African-American Applications by San Francisco Bay Area Employment Agencies: Results of a Study Utilizing "Testers". The Impact Fund, 1999.

Home care workers' case loads are regularly re-scheduled, and they reported a similar set of issues relating to selection of people for good and bad jobs and schedules. They had no access to the criteria for scheduling, and speculated that there was a pattern of certain individuals, older workers, or people from a particular state or country being consistently assigned difficult clients, or clients who lived a long distance from each other.

Workers spoke about feeling more vulnerable to racial and sexual harassment in the workplace because they were not permanent staff. Some had been the target of remarks and actions from co-workers and supervisors which they felt would never be directed to permanent staff. Contingent workers generally have no protection under a collective agreement and have only marginal access to workplace complaints processes. Those who do complain have very little protection from further discrimination and harassment, or from the loss of their job.

Study participants told us about several temporary service agencies and day hire companies which particularly recruit new immigrants. They expressed real concern that some were less than scrupulous, and worried that they explicitly took advantage of new immigrants' unfamiliarity with their rights. They reported situations where unprepared workers had paid fees for being placed on an agency's list, and even situations where the company did not pay the workers.

6. Impact of Contingent Work Arrangements on the Quality of Work

Another issue that emerged during the group interviews was the impact of contingent work on the quality of the work done. This was particularly raised by contract workers in community service organizations, although similar issues may affect workers in other sectors.

The community workers pointed out that the fact that they were on contract related to the way that their organizations were funded. In the last decade sectors of community

> *"Community agencies are like contract workers for the government"*
>
> Several community workers described a particular kind of pressure to work so that the agency will have its funding renewed, rather than working to serve their clients. "Because of constant renewals, it feels government becomes the primary "client" or "customer". We are not able to build networks, or even establish long term relationships with clients".

service work have been privatized, or had their funding reduced, or the funding has been restructured to annual or six month project periods. Many organizations feel able to hire only a few permanent staff and contract the rest based on funding.

The workers said that they are very aware of not always feeling safe to be the strong client advocates that they would like to be. They don't feel able to make observations or develop ideas which might create significant program disruptions, and have observed that consequently their agencies don't have the room to develop fully appropriate programs. They also observed that their clients experience the agency as always starting up a new project and starting all over again with new staff, and that it is tough to build longer term trust relationships in that climate.

They reported being constantly aware that they need the recommendation of their current supervisors to get the next contract, and consequently tend to avoid more contentious ideas and actions. "Permanent staff might voice their concerns, but it is harder for us." "It is hard to say I made a mistake, and at least as hard to say that someone else made a mistake," One worker pointed out that in order to survive, "you try to get the organization to depend on you. It's hard to do this and not be competitive with your co-workers." They had enough experience with project cycles to note that workplace dynamics between contract co-workers can become particularly difficult towards the end of a project when uncertainty about project renewal and personal futures becomes most pressing. They also observed that many contract workers are not fully present in the last two months of a contract because they are looking for the next job.

7. Impact of Contingent Work on Personal Life

The personal issue that was true for and concerned most respondents was that their work schedules made it difficult to spend "quality time" with their friends, family and partners.

> ***Quality Time At 4:00 AM***
>
> One temporary worker described what it meant to maintain a household when she and her partner both worked different shifts. " My husband leaves at 5:00 AM and gets back at 6:00 PM. I don't get home from my shift until 12:30 AM. Then I have to get up with my husband at 4:00 AM to get him off to work. In the morning I do the housework and cooking before I leave for my shift".

Contingent work and its changing schedules had significant impact on workers' ability to spend quality time with intimates and to look after themselves..

- 72% said that their changing schedule made it hard to spend "quality" time with friends and partners. Individuals told us that not only was the scheduling

difficult, but that they were too exhausted after long shifts to spend decent time with other people.

- 61% found it hard to but also to take care of their own appointments.
- 65% said that their schedules made it difficult to take part in community activities. Several said that they felt isolated from a community.
- Among those respondents who had children and other dependents, 63% found it difficult to schedule care arrangements and 63% found it hard to to pay consistent attention to children's school work.
- An issue that was important particularly for young respondents was that they did not have enough resources to be able to live independently.

8. Positive Aspects of the Work

In preparing to support contingent workers, it is important to understand what aspects of the work people like, and what might keep them in this kind of work. Our questions were intended to test some of the prevailing ideas about whether people actively choose to do contingent work and why.

For this group of low waged workers, the most positive aspect of contingent work was that they have some form of work and some income. Of those who had jobs at the time of the survey, 74% said that having work was the best thing about the way they were working. Just over one quarter of the survey respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their work arrangement - the other 72% said that they wanted to find a permanent job.

That said, some aspects of contingent work arrangements were appealing:

- 72% said that their work made it possible for them to keep their skills updated. Of those, 35% said that it was one of the most positive things about their work.
- 58% said that they didn't have to get involved in workplace dynamics or problems, but only one quarter (24%) of those said that it was among the most positive aspects of their work.
- 53% said that they felt they had more control over how they do their work, including individual observations that they could refuse work and leave a job if it is unpleasant. Of these people, one third (33%) said it was one of the most positive aspects of their work.
- Half said that they had more control over the hours that they worked, although this was contradicted in responses to other questions in the survey. Of those 39% said this was one of the most positive aspects of their work.
- Half said that they did not spend a lot of time traveling to and from work. Of these, one third (34%) said that is was among the most important positive aspects of their work.

- 36% said that they work fewer hours, and among those who did, 28% liked it enough to include it as one of the most positive aspects of their work.
- Individuals added that they liked the mix of working alone and in a project team; and that they enjoyed the challenge of a new work environment every day.

9. Work Futures

The biggest concern for this group of contingent workers as they looked to their future was the transition to new jobs and or contracts. 79% reported that jobs/contracts were hard to find, and 43% of those said it was their biggest concern. Many were concerned about the message that they received from employment counselors, that contingent work was the way of the future and that it was the best work that they could get.

Better, Permanent Jobs

Most wanted better jobs, and **72% wanted permanent jobs**. Their responses indicated that that most saw themselves on a career progression, but recognized that finding better jobs was not going to be easy. Some individuals said that they felt stuck, that they worked hard, their work wasn't recognized and they weren't getting anywhere. Others (65%) indicated that they were currently under-employed, and were not using all their skills and education. For some the progression wasn't into different kinds of work, but into better shifts. One respondent said that she wanted to stop working nights and find day time work.

Temporary Agency Contracts

Many workers are encouraged to take temporary work because of the possibility that an assignment may lead to a permanent job. A number of respondents told us that they were surprised to learn that they were restricted from taking any permanent job that was offered to them at their assignment workplaces, or that they could only take a job at the assignment workplace after a certain period of time (usually one year). The agencies have agreements to this effect with their client companies, so that they are not used as a recruitment service for permanent positions unless the employer clients are prepared to pay for that service. Sometimes an employer is prepared to pay a "finder's fee" to the agency which will enable the employee to move into a permanent job, but this is rare.

The survey respondents reported that this felt like the equivalent of indentured labour, that they felt trapped in temporary work and unable to work for an employer of their choice.

Training and Education

> ***Training is a long term investment - contingent workers are short term***
>
> A community agency worker told us that she had received very little workplace training. "Agencies don't see the use of the investment in individuals who are not likely to be with them for long".

Contingent workers are very much on their own when it comes to training. They receive very little support from employers, who expect them to come into a job fully trained. Sometimes they are expected to be better trained than the permanent workers.

Even though many of the younger survey respondents were students, 72% of the respondent group said that they did not have enough money for training and education. A much smaller proportion, 34%, said that they didn't have the time for training or education, and that changing schedules made studying difficult.

The small number of contingent workers who are able to access EI are generally not eligible for that program's training funds. Most do not qualify, either because they have not worked sufficient hours, or if they are a temporary worker, because they have employable skills (and according to EI, don't need more). If they are eligible, they must pay a portion of their fees, which eliminates many of an already very small group.

SECTION V. Recommendations

The Project was interested in learning about the "burning" issues that might bring contingent workers together. Three sets of concerns emerged from the study as being the most crucial, and these should inform future outreach and strategies. They are really clusters of issues related to i) wages and security, ii) improved working schedules, and iii) improved benefits. The group interviews were able to make more specific suggestions about kinds of outreach and the content for an immediate set of workshops and meetings.

Wages and Security

The most burning issue for this group of workers was wages and security. Almost half (46%) said that if they could, they would find a new job or transform their current job into one that is permanent and that pays fair (higher) wages. That is, they wanted the same working conditions as permanent workers. Another 7% said that they wanted work in their field where they could use their knowledge, skills and expertise.

There are not permanent jobs for contingent workers to move into in the current job market. The kind of changes workers want can not be accomplished by individuals becoming more effective job hunters. Truly achieving this goal will require a large and collective effort which focuses on changing the labour market itself so that there are more secure jobs with decent salaries.

This suggests a range of possible actions:

i) establish an organization of contingent workers which develops the power needed to make changes in working conditions and wages, in legislation and in government programs.
ii) create peer support systems which can assist individuals to negotiate better contracts, pressure for higher wages and find appropriate sources of support
iii) expose unfair and illegal labour practices using the legal system and direct actions which publicize cases.
iv) advocate for employment standards and enforcement mechanisms which actually protect contingent workers
v) advocate for more collective forms of negotiating contracts with employers in each industrial sector. This could take the form of sectoral bargaining, or sectoral regulation.
vi) establish and publicize a fair code of conduct for temporary service agencies, and advocate for a regulatory system that is accountable to workers
vii) work with unions and community groups to pressure employers to include contract and temporary workers in their collective agreements, and to

transform as many positions as are in their jurisdiction into secure, decent jobs.

It also suggests the reverse - that strategies which do not include some effort to address wages and security would not be relevant to this group of workers.

Improved Working Schedules

The second priority of this group was to improve their working schedules. 18% wanted more hours if they didn't have enough work, fewer hours if they had too many, predictable schedules, work during the winter, work during the day, weekends off, and reduced travel time.

This suggests:

i) collective actions which publicize unfair practices around hours and schedules, and which assist workers to negotiate better schedules in their current workplaces.
ii) advocacy for employment standards and enforcement mechanisms which actually protect workers from long hours, unwanted split shifts, too many hours on call, and too few hours.

Improved Benefits

The third priority was to improve benefits associated with their work. 14% said that if they wanted overtime pay, sick days and assistance with child care and transportation.

This also suggests collective strategies which:

i) assist workers to negotiate benefits in their current workplaces.
ii) advocate for expanding legal ESA entitlements to include sick leave, maternity leave and other provisions.
iii) advocate for expansion of EI and WSIB so that they adequately protect contingent workers
iv) collaborate with the campaign for a national child care program
v) organize some group benefits outside of the workplace, such as group medical and dental insurance

Issues Differ for Each Group

While the survey has provided us with an overview of the concerns of a large group of workers in Toronto, the group interviews emphasized that the issues differ with each cluster of workers and consequently, so should our strategies. For instance, the home care workers we spoke with were focused on getting a better contract with their current employer. Temporary agency workers were dealing with multiple

employers and minimal, if not illegal employment conditions. Community contract workers were interested in how to negotiate better contracts with their employers while not jeopardizing their relationships with clients. The clusters of home care workers and temporary workers were more comfortable working in languages other than English.

This experience suggests that:

i) outreach strategies need to be specific to groups of workers who have the same or similar employers, and to those who have similar employment contracts. For instance, community services workers may be interested in advocacy which encourages community employers to insist that funders provide enough money for projects so that they can pay workers fair wages.
ii) outreach be done in the language workers are the most comfortable with.

Workshops and Meetings

The group interview participants were asked whether they thought further meetings and workshops might be immediately useful with their co-workers. They indicated that they would be useful, and recommended the following content:

i) specific information about contract, part-time and temporary workers rights and entitlements, employment standards information, best practices in the temporary services industry, etc.
ii) information about employment "scams"
iii) strategies for finding better work
iv) examples of contracts that individuals might negotiate with their employer
v) information about the broader context of the growth of contingent work
vi) exercises that build familiarity and a sense of a group with other workers in a similar situation.

STUDY TABLES

Table A
Work Arrangements by Gender, Age and Time in Canada
Percent of Respondents

	Gender		Age				Time in Canada					
	M %	F %	19 - 24 years %	25 - 39 years %	40 - 55 years %	55 + years %	< 1 year %	1 - 3 years %	4 - 9 years %	10 - 15 years %	15 + years %	All my life %
Contract	28.3	71.7	24.1	34.4	37.9	3.4	2.9	11.7	32.3	26.5		26.5
Self Employed	37.5	62.5	2.5	57.1	14.2				14.2	57.1		28.6
Temporary	5.8	94.2	24.0	24.0	28.0	24.0	8.5	14.2	17.1	22.8	17.1	20.0
Part Time	9.4	90.6	45.8	29.1	25.0			3.7	14.8	14.8	25.9	40.7
Multiple Jobs	22.2	77.8	28.5	14.2	57.1				50.0	25.0		25.0

55

56

Table B
Work Arrangement by Monthly Earnings
Number of Respondents

	Total	Below $500	$500 - $1,000	$1,000 - $1,500	$1,500 - $2,000	$2,000 - $2,500	$2,500 - $3,000	$3,000 -$3,500	$3,500 - $4,000	Above $4,000	NA
All Respondents	193	45	51	38	30	14	5	3	1	2	4
Contract	62	5	11	17	15	9	1	1	1	1	1
Self Employed	13	4	3		1	2	2				1
Temporary	49	10	16	10	9		1			1	2
Part Time	56	23	20	6	2	2	1	2			
Multiple Jobs	13	3	1	5	3	1					

Figure B
Proportion of Respondents Earning At Different Income Levels In Each Work Arrangement

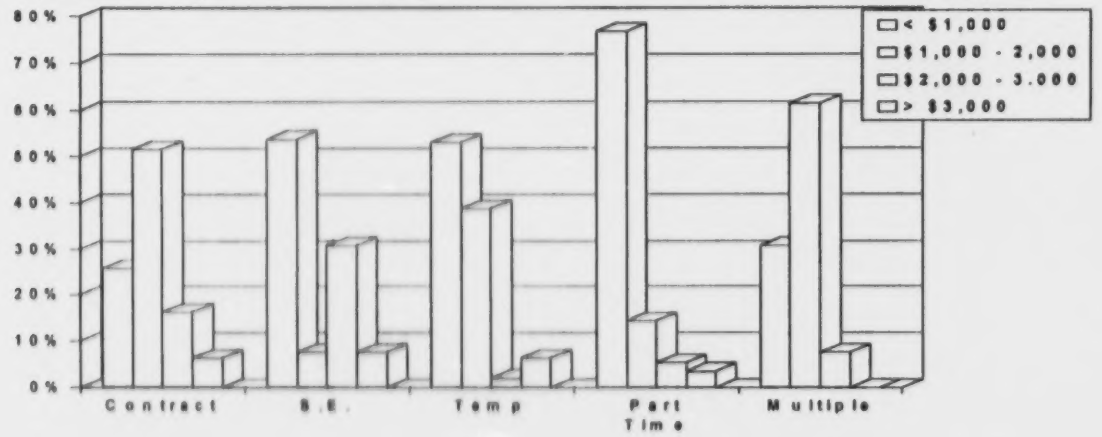
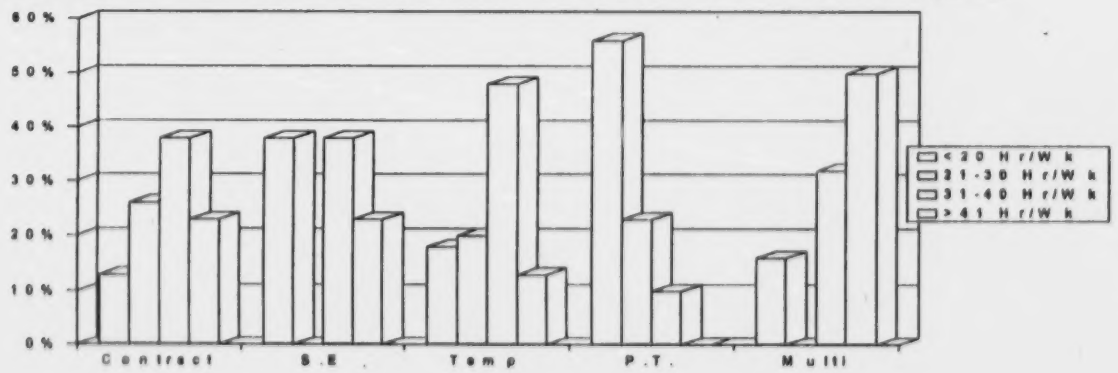


Table C
Work Arrangement by Hours Worked Per Week
Number of Respondents

	0 - 10 Hrs/Wk	11 - 20 Hrs/Wk	21 - 30 Hrs/Wk	31 - 40 Hrs/Wk	41 - 50 Hrs/Wk	50+ Hrs/Wk	NA
Contract	3	5	16	23	10	4	
Self Employed	2	3		5	2	1	
Temporary	4	3	8	19	4	1	
Part Time	5	24	14	5	1	2	
Multiple Jobs		2		4	2	4	
Respondents	14	37	38	56	19	12	15

Figure C
Proportion of Respondents Working Different Hours/Week In Each Work Arrangement



59

60

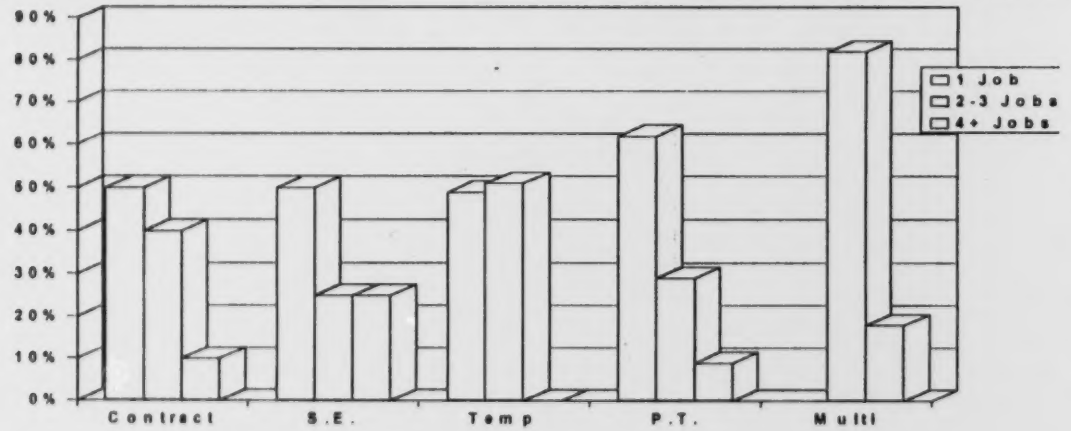
Table D

Work Arrangements and Number Of Jobs/ Contracts In Last 12 Months
Number of Respondents

	1 Job	2 - 3 Jobs	4 - 6 Jobs	7 - 9 Jobs	More than 9
Contract	31	25	6		
Self Employed	4	2	1		1
Temporary	15	18	2		
Part Time	30	14	3		1
Multiple Jobs	2	9			

Figure D

Number of Jobs In Last 12 Months -Proportion of Respondents In Each Work Arrangement



61

62

Table E

Work Arrangement by Industry

Number of Responses Note: many workers were employed in more than one industry

	Total contracts/ jobs	% of Total	Contract	Self Employed	Temporary	Part Time	Multiple Jobs
All industry	**235**	**100%**					
Community Agencies	**70**	29.7%	30	3	14	17	6
Construction	**5**	2.1%	1		4		
Finance, insurance	**7**	2.9%	2		5		
Government	**20**	8.5%	11	1	3	5	
Health Services	**26**	11.0%	4	2	9	8	3
Manufacturing	**17**	7.2%	6		10		1
Personal Services	**26**	11.0%	8	2	5	7	4
Retail	**24**	10.2%	1	1	2	19	1
Services to business	**26**	11.0%	6	3	10	5	2
Tourism, food & beverage	**14**	5.9%		1	2	10	1
Transportation	**0**						

Table F

Monthly Earnings by Primary Industry of Employment

	Total	Below $500	$500 - $1,000	$1,000 - $1,500	$1,500 - $2,000	$2,000 - $2,500	$2,500 - $3,000	$3,000- $3,500	$3,500 - $4,000	Above $4,000	na
All Workers	**205**	**45**	**52**	**40**	**31**	**16**	**6**	**3**	**1**	**4**	**7**
Community Agencies	71	11	16	18	15	9	1				
Construction	5	1	3	1							
Finance, Insurance	7	1	1	1	2	1	1				
Government	17	3	1	7	1	4			1		
Health Services	13	5	2	1	1		2	2			
Manufacturing	16	3	5	2	3			1		1	1
Personal Services	10	3	1	3	3						
Retail	18	7	6	2		1	1			1	
Services to Business	19	5	6	1	2		1			2	2
Tourism, Food & Bev	9	3	5	1							
Transportation											
na	20	3	6	3	4	1					3

Table G
Company Size by Work Arrangement and Monthly Earnings
Number of Respondents

Company Size		Work Arrangements					Monthly Earnings			
	Total Responses	Contract	Self Employed	Temp.	Part Time	Multiple Jobs	<$1000	$1,000 - $2,000	$2,000 - $3,000	$3,000+
0-9 Employees	28	7	7	1	9	3	14	6	6	1
10-49 Employees	37	20		2	8	2	14	15	3	
50-99 Employees	39	10	1	10	10	2	14	16	3	1
100-499 Employees	29	6	1	7	9	1	11	11	3	2
500+ Employees	30	5	1	6	13	2	13	8	3	3

Table H
Monthly Earnings by Gender, Age and Time in Canada
Number of Respondents

	Gender		Age				Time in Canada					
	M	F	19 - 24 years	25 - 39 years	40 - 55 years	55 + years	< 1 year %	1 - 3 years %	4 - 9 years %	10 - 15 years %	15 + years %	All my life %
< $500	3	33	8	7	4	1	3	1	4	4	5	11
$500 - 1,000	6	33	8	7	8	3		3	8	5	7	8
$1,000 - 1,500	5	23	5	8	5	2	1	4	7	6	3	4
$1,500 - 2,000	5	13	1	8	6	1			6	3	4	2
$2,000 - 2,500	1	6	2	4	1					1	2	5
$2,500 - 3,000					1				1			
> $3,000	1	2	1	1	2						1	3
Total Respondents	21	110	25	33	27	7	4	8	26	19	22	33
% under $1,500	62%	81%	84%	66%	62%	85%	100%	100%	73%	78%	68%	69%

Table I
Earnings and Scheduling (Survey Question 12)

Issue	True	Not True	Of Most Concern
1. I am paid for a completed piece of work, rather than by the hour	25	151	9
2. My pay is not increasing	87	53	73
3. I am never certain when I will get paid	28	151	12
4. If there is a mistake or problem in the work, I don't get paid, or I have to pay for it	24	155	10
5. The number of tasks I have to do is increasing	100	77	22
6. The cost of equipment and its maintenance that I have to provide is increasing.	32	138	5
7. I don't know my schedule in advance	54	124	22
8. I work split shifts	52	116	14
9. Some weeks I have too many work hours, other weeks not enough hours	89	98	37

Survey respondents added the following concerns:

- not enough work (6)
- no job security (6)
- no benefits (5)
- long hours of work
- inconvenient hours of work (3)
- too much overtime
- underpaid for the work
- work is not valued (2)
- want more responsibility
- workers are rewarded by who they know, not how they do the job
- more work than in job description
- work is monotonous
- difficulty finding new contracts/jobs
- no breaks during work
- verbal & physical harassment in workplace
- agency does not pay at all

Table J

Benefits That Are The Most Important To Respondents (Survey Question 13)

Benefit	Paid by Employer	Paid by Self	Not Covered	Of Most Concern
1. Holiday pay	98	5	62	29
2. Overtime	75	2	75	19
3. Sick leave	38	6	109	51
4. Maternity leave	36	6	103	8
5. Employment Insurance	77		69	15
6. Medical insurance	49	18	97	70
7. Dental insurance	30	20	104	43
8. Workers Safety & Insurance	54		85	21
9. Disability insurance	30	10	111	28
10. Pension	54	14	89	17
11. Severance pay	29	6	110	8

Table K

Most Positive Aspects of Work (Survey Question 15)

Positive Aspects	True	Not True	Most Positive
1. I have work	169	17	125
2. I am able to keep my skills updated	131	52	46
3. I have more control over which hours I work	87	88	34
4. I have more control over how I do my work	95	83	31
5. I don't have to get involved in workplace dynamics or problems	101	74	24
6. I work fewer hours	60	106	17
7. I do not spend a lot of time traveling to and from work	88	89	30

Table L
Health and Safety Concerns (Survey Question 16)

Issues	True	Not True	Of Most Concern
1. Job related stress is increasing	101	73	56
2. I have job related health problems	44	125	21
3. I feel isolated because of how I work	51	120	20
4. My employer does not take responsibility for my job related health or injury problems	59	101	27
5. I have not received any health and safety training	97	76	39
6. I have not received enough health and safety training	97	71	28

Table M
Concerns About Impact Of Work On Personal Life (Survey Question 18)

Issue	True	Not True	Doesn't Apply	Of Most Concern
1. It is difficult to make consistent child care arrangements	22	18	112	9
2. It is difficult to make consistent care arrangements for other dependents	19	18	110	6
3. Transportation to different job sites takes up too much time	61	35	64	21
4. It is difficult to coordinate my schedule with my partner's schedule	40	23	95	12
5. It is difficult to consistently support children with school work	29	17	113	8
6. My changing schedule makes it hard to spent "quality" time with friends and partners	83	32	48	38
7. My changing schedule makes it hard to participate in community activities	79	42	43	21
8. My work hours make it difficult to schedule personal appointments	85	54	29	36

Table N

Concerns About Work Future (Survey Question 19)

Issues	True	Not True	Of Most Concern
1. It is hard to find new jobs/ contracts	141	37	61
2. I am not using all my skills or education	111	60	38
3. I want to find a permanent job	121	48	62
4. I do not have time for training or education	60	104	15
5. I do not have money for training or education	124	48	55